

CONSUMER ALERT NEWS RELEASE

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December 23, 2015

NORTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS BEING INUNDATED WITH THREATENING MESSAGES FROM SCAM ARTISTS

BISMARCK, ND – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem warns North Dakotans that once again, scam artists are making calls pretending to be from the IRS. As the end of the year approaches, people are making tax preparations and the con artists are taking advantage of the situation. Stenehjem has issued numerous warnings about IRS scam calls, which have been circulating in North Dakota for at least three years.

In the latest variation, the scam artists claim that the taxpayer has ignored previous messages and is now about to be charged with fraud. The scam artist demands that the taxpayer return the call immediately to avoid further legal action or imminent arrest, and leaves a call back number. Although the call back number appears to be in the United States, the scam artists use readily available technology to relay the calls to their actual location, outside the country. Unfortunately, this puts the scam artists beyond the reach of state and federal authorities.

“These calls are not from the IRS. The scam artists just want to steal your money,” said Stenehjem, who suggested residents simply delete the message or hang up on calls.

The Internal Revenue Service urges anyone who receives a fake IRS phone call or message to report it directly to the United States Treasury inspector general:

- Phone: 1-800-366-4484 (toll free); OR
- Online report: https://www.treasury.gov/tigta/contact_report_scam.shtml, OR
- Email: phishing@irs.gov.

According to the US Treasury Inspector General’s office, between October 2013 and October 2015, over 736,000 scam contacts were reported and victims lost more than \$23 million to the scam artists.

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